



The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

● JANUARY 1985

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DIACONIA
feet-washing ministry



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The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

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25 Years Ago

The Ministry of obedient service is shared by clergy and laity, as the Protestant doctrine of the Priesthood of the Ministry of all believers affirms. The church is the Body of Christ, performing his ministry in the World. All its work and action are derived from its three basic functions of worship, fellowship, and proclamation of the Gospel. The whole of its life and outreach are dependent upon two fundamental principles—discipleship and Ministry. One cannot be a Minister of Christ without first being a disciple. He cannot be a disciple without being a Minister, for service is inherent in discipleship. Every Church member is called to be a Minister of Christ in his vocation. Minister and layman are not antithetical terms; neither do they distinguish between Christians of different orders. The real distinction is between professional and non-professional Ministers, a necessary and valid distinction, but one which must be absorbed into the partnership of obedience in service unto the Lord.

—*The Churchman*, 19

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Communal Harmony



One of the baffling and frustrated problems that both religious leaders and state authorities are confronted with is the growth in the communal riots. The harmony that was hitherto maintained is fast deteriorating and situation is becoming shocking impunity. Competition among diverse religious movements became an increasing feature of India today. The contemporary society is very peculiar where even most intimate relationships have become part of competition and rivalry.

Every nation has its birth pangs. In the case of India it was all the more acute as independence involved a partition in the country. The period preceding the partition and soon after was marked by communal violence between Hindus and Muslims of a magnitude not witnessed before. *Freedom at Midnight*—a book which gives baffling accounts of such riots must be read. Probably these were the beginning of all communal violence. The first incident occurred at Calcutta on August 19, 1946, when the Muslim League launched, 'Direct Action Day,' and by the end of October more than 100 persons were killed. Simultaneously serious riots broke out in Bombay and Allahabad, claiming over 1000 lives. The riots spread to Bihar, Lahore, Amritsar and villages in Punjab. According to the official figures the total casualties in 6 months from November 1946 were 4014 killed and 3616 injured. The partitioning of the province of Punjab between India and Pakistan led to several weeks of anarchy. The mass influx of refugees led to renewed communal riots in Delhi and Calcutta in 1947. The invasion of Kashmir in October 1947 by tribesmen

operating from Pakistan further vitiated communal peace. Following Mahatma Gandhi's assassination the Govt. of India came down heavily on communal organisations and declared the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Muslim League National Guards, and Khaksars as unlawful associations and took into custody a number of members of these organisations.

Sporadic incidents of communal violence occurred as a result of local provocations like religious festivities, property disputes and minor political issues. The year 1964 saw the most serious communal conflagration since 1947. In January, as a reaction to the reported violation against the Hindus in East Pakistan, Communal violence occurred in West Bengal. In subsequent years communal peace became disturbed with increasing frequency.

One important thing for us to note is that almost all the communal riots which occurred were either inter-religious—between Hindus and Muslims; between Sikhs and Muslims or intra-religious—between Shias and Sunnis. Christians were never indulged in any such activities. Even at times where there were provocative incidents like burning churches in Barampur, Ambala etc. by certain anti-social elements, backed by a narrow-minded religious sects, Christians never retaliated. Atrocities upon the Christians in Arunachal Pradesh, killing of a priest in Bihar, etc. speak volumes about Christians' forbearance where not a single incident was recorded in retaliation to such humiliations. In fact, rightly so, retaliation is not known to Christianity; on the other hand it was taught to bear with such onslaughts of religious maladies.

History will vouch for this claim. But now there seems to be a method in the communal madness that has been erupting for sometime now, with disturbing frequency, in one part of the country or the other. These premeditated acts of violence certainly cause anxiety in church leaders and worry all the peace loving people of the areas. To be honest, it is only a negligible number of militant narrow-religious minded people who are hostile to Christianity provoking communal feelings which invariably take a violent turn; otherwise the majority of the Hindu Community is always accommodative, friendly, tolerant and accepting all good teachings from Christianity. In order to maintain communal amity and peace Govt. should take stringent action against such short sighted Communal organisations.

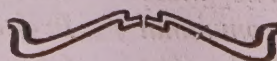
I think it is essential on our part to develop more public relations and friendly ties with the people of other faiths. We need to create more common platforms wherein we, together with our friends, can share some of the problems of the society and express our concern for national issues. It is our identity with the people irrespective of caste, creed and religion, that counts more now in such matters relating to the communal amity.

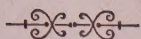
We can think of peace centres or dialogic centres—meeting places, where people of particular town or village can come together and participate in discussion, recreational, cultural and other common activities. This centre should act as a social agency that represents the effort of people to promote community solidarity and to improve certain aspects of life of a local community. It enables people to become active and articulate neighbours having concern for common well-being. The centre should instil a new spirit in the residents of the locality and revitalisation of community living through mutual co-operation.

However, we as the Christians and true patriots of our motherland shall not involve ourselves in any untoward activities which disturb the peace and normal life of the society. Jesus Christ is our example who never uttered a word against anyone even when He was nailed to the cross for no fault of His. On the other hand, He prayed that those who were persecuting Him should be forgiven. That should be our prayer today as we receive yet another year as a gift from God the Almighty.

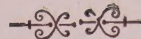
—DASS BA

*A Bright
and
Prosperous
New Year to you all !!*





Happy New Year



We wish all our readers a Happy New Year. Wishing a happy New Year has become a tradition and we need to go into this in some detail and with some concern. As a Church we would like to wish our readers a Happy New Year in rather specific terms and also pray that 1985 will be a fulfilment of the needs of our country and our Church.

Year of solutions

At the beginning of each year we resolve to do something or we resolve not to do something. We have many New Year resolutions. May we pray that God will make 1985 not only a year of resolutions but more a year of solutions. We will have to attempt solutions in many directions.

As a Church we are dealing with ecumenism and with larger union. We are discussing union with the Church of North India and with the Mar Thoma churches. We will have to seek some solution that will be guided by the Spirit of God and resolve to dare into union. The Holy Spirit is the God of venture and He will help us to find new solutions to some of our old problems. 1985 should be a year of solutions.

Politically we will have to find solutions for the welfare of our country. We may have to be more daring and bold in finding solutions to the problems related to injustice and oppression. As I write this article we are at the eve of our elections and one does not know what we are forging into but one certainly knows the God who is with us as we forge forth into new ministries in our Cabinets. The Christian community will have solutions to offer to the nation. We will have to be a reconciling community and offer healing where it is necessary, justice where it is necessary and Liberation where it is necessary.

Year of Peace, Justice and Development

1985 has been declared to be the International Year of the Youth. We need to pull the youth out of cold storage and put them to right use. They are rich in potential and bouncing with energy. This potential and energy must be channelised for the development of our country, for the development of the people and for peace and justice. We must make this a great year and a grand year for our youth.

Year of Concerns

We should make 1985 a year of concerns—concerns for the poor and the rural communities. Urban churches would need to be more concerned about rural churches, urban families would need to share more with rural communities, urban institutions should pool their resources with rural institutions and we need to evolve a policy of caring, sharing and daring in 1985. We need to care for the poor, we need to share with the poor and we need to dare for the poor.

The task before us is so enormous that we feel any attempt will be futile and will not even touch on the fringe of the problem. It could be so but we must remember that the small community that we are, may not be able to eradicate poverty but we can help to lessen poverty. We must work towards lessening and lightening the yoke of poverty in our country. Every little effort will have some impact though small on the total welfare of the nation. I can see the Church having much to contribute towards the welfare of the poor.

Let me wish every reader a Blessed New Year.

SUNDAR CLARKE,
Bishop-in-Madras.



Women's Participation at the consultation on Diaconal Ministry.

'Feet Washing Ministry

Most Revd. I. JESUDASON, *Moderator*



This introductory presentation is intended to gather together the trends of our thinking in the past on the subject and to direct our attention towards the task of shaping a relevant and feasible diaconal programme including training. With this objective in mind, let me first give you a brief summary of the thinking of the church in the past on this subject.

At the 1962 Synod a paper was presented entitled 'the Diaconate in the CSI'. It was found that no diocese of the CSI had a permanent diaconate, either paid or honorary, established as the integral part of the ministry of the church. The Theological Commission was asked to make further study on the matter. The Theological Commission after 2 years of deliberations presented its report before the 1964 Synod. The following were some of the main accepted resolutions :

1. The practice of ordaining direct to the Presbyterate be recognised as normal while permitting the dioceses, wanting to do so, to use the deacon's ordination as a preliminary to the presbyteral ordination. Where this is done a Service of Acceptance may be used to replace the present Deacon's ordination.

2. Within the three-fold ministry some who have a calling for compassionate service are to be set aside by deacon's ordination to be the representative organ of the Church's diaconia in the name of Christ. This is to be a life-time calling to serve and that only when the diaconate is so conceived will it be a worthy instrument of Christ's diaconia and a part of His total ministry.

3. The deacon's particular responsibility in worship would be for the offerings of the people and the intercession for the world. His responsibility in the

world would be organisation, co-ordination and promotion of Christian Service and social action, a ministry which expresses Christ's compassion for His people.

4. The Church is called to a new effort, to thought, prayer and action in this matter. The first step should be to encourage the abolition of the present stepping stone diaconate and ordain men direct to the presbyterate after a period of probation. The dioceses who wish to do so should be permitted to take action along these lines in the selection of suitable men for the diaconate.

Next comes the evaluation report known as 'CSI After 30 Years' published in 1978. Though this report contains very little about diaconal ministry, the following points in the report have some bearing on our subject

1. In order to solve the problem of the paucity of theologically trained presbyters and the consequent famine of sacraments in village congregations, honorary lay leaders should be commissioned to celebrate Holy Communion and to conduct worship services.

2. In order to develop an active and vigorous ministry, the dioceses should organise non-formal theological education programme setting apart a person for the theological education of the laity.

3. For the benefit of the members of the Church, Committees and councils of the church at various levels and their officers, effective programmes of training should be organised at the parsonage, diocesan and Synod levels.

4. Heads of Christian institutions and other persons serving in them should be given special training in professional skills recommended for this programme.

5. The Synod should establish a high level institute for developing leadership in the Church.

Then in 1979, the CS organised a consultation on 'Patterns of Ministry'. In the report of the consultation there is a section on the Diaconate which deals with rationale, organizational relationship, functions, recruitment and training. The report says: '... We are deeply convinced that step have to be taken immediately to release the heavy burden under which many of our Presbyters are working being called up to do such things for which they are neither called nor trained...'

The following functions of the diaconate are stipulated in that report:

(a) Organising within the sphere of their own work, groups and fellowships to wrestle with day to day problems bringing in the implications of the Gospel and the relevance of the work they do.

(b) As channels of the resources of the Church in terms of the scriptures and the sacraments to be made available to the people working in factories, schools, hospitals, etc., so that the frontier of the church with the world is illuminated, licensing Deacons to celebrate Holy Communion.

(c) To undergird the developmental and social activities, giving it a deep spiritual and theological basis by identifying the building up to the Kingdom of God in these specific areas.

(d) To help the congregations to develop an outward looking missionary orientated awareness as against an inward looking ghetto like attitude.

(e) To make the people of God aware of their stewardship responsibilities.

The report also sees that the Diaconate is to be fully trained by the Church and with a life long commitment to the service, the training being distinctly different from that of the presbyter.

While the responsibility of the Presbyter is mainly to help the growth and nurture of the congregations, the responsibility of the Deacon will mainly be to harness and train honorary Deacons and also the whole congregation in different vocations, to fulfil the mission of the kingdom in the world.

The dioceses were asked to make further study along the lines indicated in the report of ways by which the diaconate can be made a more meaningful ministry in the light of the fulness of the ministry of Christ. The following questions were put for such a study:

- (i) What content and meaning can we give to the diaconate? This is the subject of primary importance or enquiry. If the office of permanent deacon is to be established, its function should be so defined and distinguished from those of presbyters and laymen, so that men may be convinced that they have a divine vocation in this ministry.
- (ii) If it is found desirable to promote the establishment of a permanent diaconate, which type of candidates should be accepted for this ministry? In the case of honorary permanent deacons, should the choice be of men already engaged in the work specifically sponsored by the Church or should it be extended to those engaged in a variety of occupations in the life of the nation?

(iii) Should the diaconate be a ministry of the church to its own people or should it be a ministry to the world at large? Should there be a constant reinterpretation of the meaning of the diaconate in terms of human need?

(iv) The question of the training of permanent deacons should be studied. If the diaconate is a ministry different from the presbyterate, is it advisable to send deacons to a course of training intended for training Presbyters? Should they not receive a different type of training even if it is in the same theological college?

(v) How can members of the Church Committees be helped to understand the vocational character of the representative office to which they have been elected?

Unfortunately Dioceses could not make specific and intensive study on these issues due to various reasons.

Finally comes the study conducted by the Synod in 1982 on 'Priorities for the Mission' of the church. Throughout the study process there was repeated emphasis on diaconal training and a separate Diaconate as the ministry of the Church, without making it a mere stepping-stone to the presbyter ordination. This order (diaconate) should take the responsibility of the mundane and material aspects of service to the community similar to that of the deacons in the Book of Acts, Chapter 6. That would bring in a spiritual content and commitment to the developmental services and administrative ministries of the Church.

It was agreed that a School of Diaconal Training in each region be set up with programmes to train the personnel and develop this type of special ministry for the church.

Minutes of the sub committee on Diaconal Training Programme give a statement regarding the aims and objectives of the diaconal training.

'The diaconal training is intended to train persons engaged in the different ministries and services of the church with a view to lead them for a life-time commitment for these special ministries, so that the local congregations may be motivated to developmental and social action. This training is meant for men and women who are engaged in the different services of the church in order to strengthen them in their commitment and faith and to bring the positive element of their faith to bear upon their ministry. Such people with a sense of calling may be considered for Ordination to the permanent Diaconate of the Church, based on the Synod and Diocesan procedures. These will serve as a Sisterhood and Brotherhood of the Church, giving leadership and commitment to those among whom they serve. The Order of the Sisters of CSI could also be included in the training. This training will be arranged for Doctors, Nurses, Engineers, Accountants, Social Workers, Developmental Workers, Christian Education Workers, Child Care Workers and for any body in other ministries which form part of the life and work of the church. Those who have worked for at least three years in the church could be considered for this training.'

We are now gathered here to do the follow up work and thus to complete the process that started as early as 1962. Recent trends in the thinking on diaconal ministry are not so much on its designation and position

in the three-fold ministry of the Church as on its nature and function in the total involvement of the church in its mission to the people both within and outside. Even if people who are engaged in the type of ministry were not given the name 'deacon' they would be fulfilling the purpose and function of the diaconate. So in this Seminar we shall try to look at the diaconal ministry as a means to provide an appropriate and relevant ministry for the church in today's context in every situation and at all levels. With this background let me now proceed to a brief reflection on the image of the 'Servant of God' as given in the Book of Deutero Isaiah. Roots of N. T. diaconate lie in this prophetic image, which was fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

From centuries of experience of God's chosen people, their prophets came to realise the mystery and meaning of God's call and choice. They tried to express this mystery through symbols of which the image of the servant of God described by Deutero Isaiah is unique. This image is given in the well known passages found in Isaiah 42: 1-4; 49: 1-6; 50: 4-9; 52: 13-53: 12.

These passages are written in poetic form and so they are generally known as servant songs. Hebrew word for 'Servant or slave' is 'ebed'. The Hebrew phrase 'ebed-Yahweh' is translated as 'Servant of God' or 'Servant of the Lord'. The Greek translation of 'ebed' is 'doulos' which means 'slave'. The words 'doulos' and 'diaconos' though do not come from the same root their meaning is the same slave or servant.

God's intention is that His chosen people should be a servant community. If a community happens to live among the oppressive nations, exploiting systems and military powers, the natural tendency would be to seek special privileges among them by the help of God and to struggle to achieve authority, power, and worldly glory like other nations. Understandably, the chosen people of God followed the same course. But lessons of defeat, exile and humiliation made them realise the hard truth that lies behind their call and election. We learn this from the 'Servant Songs'. Let me highlight some characteristics that go with this image of 'God's servant'.

1. The servant is God's servant by call and anointing of God's spirit. God calls him 'my servant'. The servant is God's instrument to achieve God's purposes in the world. God the Creator and Redeemer reveals Himself and acts in and through his servant (See Is. 42: 1, 2; 49: 3; 53: 1; 55: 10).

2. The servant of God is at the same time the servant of people through and through. He is to bring forth judgment to the gentiles (Is. 42: 1). Islands are waiting for him (Is. 42: 4). He opens the eyes of the blind, releases the captives and sheds light where darkness prevails (Is. 42: 7). His salvation goes to the ends of the earth (Is. 49: 6).

3. The servant's strategy for bringing God's salvation is unique. It is something unbelievable to authoritarian systems and power mongering nations of this world. People who are accustomed to the worldly ways of success cannot understand the servant's method. 'But now many nations will marvel at him and kings will be speechless with amazement. They will see and understand something they had never known' (Is. 52: 15). Love and vicarious suffering are His methods. He shall deal with others prudently (Is. 53: 13).

A bruised reed, he shall not break and a smoking flame, he shall not quench yet he shall not fail or discouraged. He takes upon himself human sufferings and sin and lets people go free. His rejection, humiliation and shame were total, yet he is exalted supreme that people may adore him and follow his way.

4. Mission of the Servant is to establish justice in the world (Is. 42: 1-4; 49: 6-53). Justice here means right relationship with God which results in joy in the Holy Spirit and right relationship with man which results in happiness: freedom from fear, hunger, disease and want. One without the other is not justice or righteousness in the biblical sense.

5. The 'Servant Songs' represent a community as well as an individual—past or future. Debate on this issue among scholars is not relevant here. Jesus Christ bearing the corporate personality stands for the true Israel and he had fulfilled in a supreme manner God's mission as reflected in the servant songs. Christian interpreters are unanimous that whoever was the servant portrayed by the prophet, Jesus—crucified and risen alone responds adequately to the picture of his person and work. In his person and work Jesus Christ stands as the true servant of God. He is both son of God and son of man who reconciles man to God and man to man (The Hebrew word 'ched' also was translated 'son' in Isaiah 42.)

In Matthew 12: 18, one of the Servant songs (Is. 42: 1-4) is quoted to show that the servant of the Lord prophesied was fulfilled in the person and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus Himself expressed His mission using the language of Servant songs. One of the significant sayings of Jesus on this is recorded in all the synoptic gospels: 'Son of man came not to be ministered but to minister and give his life as a ransom for many'. Luke 22: 27, we read 'for who is greater, the one who is at the table or one who serves. Is it not one who is at the table. I am among you as one who serves'. St. John closes the active ministry of Jesus with the portrait of Jesus' washing the feet of his disciples which was normally the duty of a slave. Jesus expects that his disciples individually and collectively should follow this example. St. Paul says that Jesus 'made himself of no higher taking the very nature of a servant', (Philippians 2: 7) and so exhorts the Christian Community, saying that their attitude should be the same as that of Christ. We as followers of Christ strive to create this attitude in us and among us.

To carry on his mission our Lord created the nation of Israel with a new covenant starting with 12 disciples around him. This community is commissioned and empowered to carry on the mission till His kingdom is fully realised. We being baptised into Christ represent His body. Our ministry is rooted and patterned in the image of the great servant of God. We receive constantly inspiration and plan of action from Him who is the head.

Diaconal ministry of the church never springs from religious piety or from an attitude of pity for others, nor from the desire to earn merit. It springs from God's concern for justice and from His kingly rule as revealed in the mystery of the incarnation, death and resurrection of God's servant. Diaconal ministry is to be exercised in the context of the proclamation of God's righteous kingdom inaugurated in Jesus Christ. We press forward looking ahead for the full manifestation of His kingdom.

There is the danger that in our enthusiasm for serving others and for establishing justice, we may move away from the foundation who is Jesus Christ the true servant of God. This has to be emphasised again and again in the context of pseudo-justice propagated by political ideologists. If we fail to understand this mystery, we may be trying for a worldly kingdom and not for the kingdom of God. These reflections place certain challenges before us. Let me close this presentation suggesting certain directions in the light of these challenges.

1. Jesus Christ, the great servant of God came to this world not to be served but to serve. This should be the core of our religious experience. Christian leaders and field workers should be sensitive to this basic purpose of the existence of the Church and to the guidance of the Holy Spirit for creating an appropriate and relevant ministry of the Church in today's context. It is the duty of the church to see that every member of it develops a sense of mission and vocation as the faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

2. Each congregation and institution should assume a true 'servant role' with prophetic dynamism, insight and courage. They should be taught and enabled for launching innovative programmes relevant and effective to the weaker sections of the community. To achieve this, it is imperative that we should create suitable conditions for fellowship. When congregations concentrate on diaconia, their petty church politics, litigation-tendency, lust for power etc. will naturally die out. Our expectation is that within the next 5 to 10 years all our congregations and church institutions should be seen doing 'feet washing service' in the community where they live, like their Master, the great servant of God.

3. We should take the life of the people seriously and get rid of anti-people attitude and anti-developmental methods of operation. Obedience to the demands of our Lord in all contemporary situations is needed. We live among people of different faiths, cultures and political ideologies. Our ministry among them should be capable of fostering love and goodwill. It is highly essential to design meaningful and relevant programmes of service in this context. Congregations and institutions should put an end to their inward looking nature and self-seeking service operations and adapt outward looking style of life and a readiness for structural change.

4. Diaconia should reflect our love, concern and spirit of self-sacrifice. There is no alternative to sacrificial giving. The servant of God became poor so that we may become rich. A self-emptying church alone can reflect the kenotic incarnation of the son of God. The word 'Kenosis' which means Self-emptying come from the word 'Conia' which derives from 'diakonia'. Genuineness of our service is judged by our sharing of resources and participation in common witness and service. Our service programmes fail to project this kenotic style because we depend heavily on foreign resources for our diaconal ministry. People look at us as those who thrive on foreign aids. This image should change. If there is a will, many of our congregations can mobilize enough resources for local mini projects.

5. There is a great urgency for the proper mobilization of human resources. This should be one of the major objectives of diaconate programme. We need grass root leaders and workers who, in love and obedience to God, would carry on His mission at the local level. So we urge the dioceses and congregations and all institutions to identify potential leaders. These must be nurtured, equipped and deployed for God's work both within and outside the church. This will kindle confidence in the people and they will come forward to accept leadership and support programmes of service.

6. We should hold fast in our faith and practice, the Biblical concept of Righteousness. Dignity and worth of human person, right relationship of man to God, man to man and man to nature are very vital in our approach to human problems. We learn this from Jesus the great servant of God who laid down His life as ransom for many. This is the unique contribution we can make and in doing so, we become light to the nations. Image of God, is revealed in the person Jesus, the true servant of God. The Holy Spirit is striving to create this image in us individually, and collectively.

I hope that these few thoughts will put us in the right track that we may arrive at concrete proposals for our future action as we proceed in this consultation. I pray for the guidance of God the Father and inspiration of the Holy Spirit that we may truly follow His son who came to be the Saviour of all and who promised to be with us till the close of the present age.

NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

DR. CHRISTOPHER DURAISINGH, Bangalore

'Behold I make anew all things,'
What vision deep this promise brings;
'Tis of new heav'n and earth we sing;
From there our hopes and actions spring;
Shalom its mark; there justice dwells;
Knowledge of God an ocean swells.

In God's new earth there's none to harm;
E'en for the weakest no alarm,
Gone scars of curse that nature bore,
And laws of jungle sway no more;
At peace and harmony are seen
The lamb and wolf in pasture green,

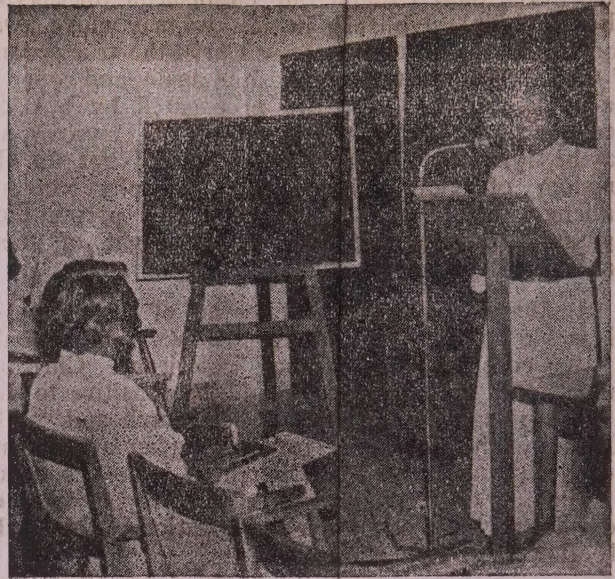
3. Creation clothed in wholeness rare,
All people in God's splendour share;
No pang of thirst, distress or pain
Nor caste, class, sex can e'er constrain
In God's new age wrought on the cross;
There Love poured out does me engross.

4. As lives and lands twisted through greed
By human pride still made to bleed,
I hear creation long and moan;
For heaven new my people groan;
Grant me the vision of new earth;
Stir me to act; bring now its birth.

Tune.: ST. PETERSBURG
(Book of Hymns : 89)

Diaconal Ministry— Its Formation

RT. REV. DR. P. VICTOR PREMASAGAR



'It is not reason that we should leave
the word of God and serve tables,
Wherefore brethren, look ye out among you
Seven men of honest report
full of Holy Ghost
and Wisdom
Whom we may appoint over this business.'

St. Luke narrates in these words the formation of the Diaconate in the early Church in Chapter six of his second book—*The Acts of the Apostles*. The story is familiar.

The Church increased and the old patterns of ministry were not adequate. The apostles who had earlier ministered at the tables in their service to the widows, found that there was some grumbling about the way in which they had served. The Apostles suggested a new order to be instituted to deal with the new changed situation. The apostles appointed seven deacons to efficiently organise the service to the widows.

The three qualifications set for these deacons are worth noting.

1. They should be men of honest report—of proven integrity and with acceptability in the community.
2. They should be full of the Holy Spirit—with a sense of call, commitment and motivation to serve.
3. They should be men of wisdom—the ability to do the work with knowledge and understanding.

This suggestion of the Apostles pleased the whole community, they chose seven amongst them and the Apostles laid hands upon them and set them apart for this new task. The Apostles gave themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word—the word for Ministry here is the same word '*Diaconia*' as that used for the ministry to the widows.

This was a different type of Ministry of serving the poor and the needy for which they set apart men of integrity and ability with a sense of call and commitment, by the laying on of hands. Thus the mundane task of serving the widows at the tables was also seen as ministry, *Diaconia* in the Church.

The Apostles could have easily asked for people to be appointed to serve under them—no, they see this task as essential as the one they themselves were doing and they create a new order through ordination of persons, with people's acceptance filled with the Holy Spirit and wisdom. While handing over this responsibility, they made sure that they handed over to the right people, with right commitment and motivation. As we read about these deacons, we note that they saw their task as part of the mission of the Church.

Stephen full of grace and power did wonders and miracles among the people. He argued with the intelligent in Jerusalem about the Gospel. His sermon before the Sanhedrin indicates that he was well equipped in interpreting the scriptures, and thus introduces Jesus to the people. He interprets the history of his people as acts of liberation by their God, but how the liberated people had turned to be oppressors and exploiters. Stephen was martyred.

We read how Philip goes about preaching in Samaria, crossing the barriers of racial prejudice, a people whom the Jews hated and considered as outcasts. He meets the Treasurer of Candace the Queen of Ethiopia and interprets the suffering servant passage in the book of Isaiah, Chapter 53 and leads him to accept Christ as Lord and to receive Baptism. Philip was involved in baptising the Eunuch.

St. Paul describes in detail the gifts of the Spirit given to the Church by her Lord to equipping the saints for the work of the Ministry (*Diaconia*) for the building up of the body of Christ.

and Ephesians 4, reflecting different contexts in which the ministry was evolved to meet the needs of the community. New contexts surface new needs and new forms of diaconal ministry should be developed for equipping the saints and building up of the Church, the body of Christ.

As we read through the New Testament an order of deacons emerges distinct from that of the Episcopacy and presbyterate. During the course of the history of the Church, this distinct order becomes only a temporary order, a stepping stone to the ordination as presbyter.

Service Institutions of the Church

The non-pastoral, sacramental and evangelistic ministries of the Church are not seen as related to the mission of the Church and as a result there is no sense of call and commitment on the part of those who serve in the service institutions of the Church, such as the Educational, healing, child care and developmental institutions.

During the Missionary era, all the missionaries, ministerial and lay, had a sense of call and commitment to be missionaries of the Gospel. They were prayed for, set apart and were sent out to engage in the mission of Jesus Christ. Such lay missionaries were responsible for starting educational, medical and other service institutions as part of the mission to which they had been sent. The Indian workers in these institutions were only seen as doing the jobs of teachers, nurses, agricultural workers, etc. As first converts they were full of zeal to live out the Gospel in all that they did, but these Indian co-workers were never considered as called with a commitment of their lives to the full time ministry of the Church. The missionary call and commitment was not transmitted to the local peoples except in the case of the ordained ministers to the extent these were termed as paid lay workers. With the departure of the missionaries, these institutions are left without dedicated and committed leadership. There developed an ethos in the Church, whereby those engaged in the institutional ministries of the Church, lacked a sense of call, a long term commitment and dedication to their profession as part of the mission of the Church. With the Government aid received for the Church institutions in the Independent India, those who work in the Church Institutions do not feel any commitment to the mission of the Church for which these institutions were originally started. Thus, Christian institutions without the commitment of lay workers, have nothing to offer different from the other institutions.

The Roman Catholic Church is able to hold this commitment to the Mission of the Church to a large extent, through its orders of brothers and sisters. There is nothing comparable to this type of commitment in the Protestant Church.

Studies of the Diaconate

The Church of South India had several studies on the Diaconate by the Theological Commission and resolved again and again to give this order its distinct place in the ministry of the Church. The Booklet 'Consultation on Patterns of Ministry', 1979, gives a detailed discussion on this order by the Church.

The Consultation on *Priorities for the Mission of the Church*, 1980-82, suggested setting up of a diaconal order to strengthen the institutional ministries of the Church.

'This order should take the responsibility for the mundane and material aspects of the service to the

community, similar to that of deacons in the Book of Acts, Chapter Six. This would bring in the spiritual content and commitment to the developmental services and Administrative ministries of the Church.'

To the traditional, educational, medical, administrative and other service institutions are added developmental programmes for the oppressed and exploited peoples in the rural and urban areas. All these should be seen as part of the total ministry of the Church. This would need committed men and women with dedication to these tasks as the mission of the Church.

Serious questions have been raised about the institutional witness of the Church in India today. The June-July numbers of the *South India Churchman*, this year have papers on this subject. Instead of enthusing dedication and commitment amongst Christian workers in these institutions, suggestions have often been made to close them or hand them over to the Government. This is a negative approach due to a lack of Christian Commitment in our institutions.

The Consultation on Priorities has come up with a positive suggestion of renewing and enthusing the lay workers in the institutions of the Church, through a call to commit themselves to the mission of the Church through diaconal training.

Diaconal Training

Diaconal Training for the diversified mission of the Church should include the following aspects :

1. *Personal Formation* : This has to do with the personal discipline daily study of the Bible with meditation, devotion and prayer. A life style that reflects commitment to the Gospel and the mission of the Church. Holding up values in life that influence others for good.
2. *Diaconal Formation* : Three dimensions of diaconal formation could be noted here.
 - (a) Service to each other in utter humility, affirming fellowship within the community of believers.
 - (b) Service to those in need and difficulties irrespective of caste-creed, etc. These deacons encourage sharing within the relation to the context, bringing faith to bear upon contemporary issues.
 - (c) Service as social Action : While striving hard to help those in need and difficulties, diaconal ministry includes social, economic and political action to redress the oppression and exploitation within the community and assist in development. Diaconal Ministry includes building up awareness in the community, organising people for action to bring about change and renewal within the community.
3. *Professional Formation* :

Engaging in formation of new creative skills and responses in the professional sphere—a teacher equipping himself/herself with new methods of learning, a doctor, forging new professional skills, a development worker, finding areas of action within the local situations, one

(Contd. on p. 13)

The Diakonia

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The Good News—is a matter of proclamation of the New Life—love based transformation of the sin-bound mankind to the New Life—the Kingdom of God. The Ministry of Jesus was marked by the words :

‘ the time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye and believe the Gospel.’ Mark 1 : 15.

‘ There are many ways of looking at the Cross of Jesus Christ, His atoning death and resurrection. Battle theory of atonement sees the cross as the fight with cosmic evil. Gustaf Aulen’s Christus Victor idea is a modern version of the ancient Ransom theory of Atonement. How did Christ combat with the powers of darkness ? His decisive victory over Satan was by self-sacrifice, by overcoming evil by good, by a non-violent struggle of courage unto death, and by fearless facing of the enemies. The crucified and risen Christ has overcome law, sin and death. The Big Enemy is defeated, but is still alive and so the Church continues the battle in every front, till he is perfectly vanquished.’—Our common witness—Combat, Witness and Diakonia—Biblical understanding by Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Osthathios.

The Gospel has to be believed with repentance as man had sinned against God and man. The Kingdom of God with the rule of love, justice, peace and equality have to come to take hold of man who had degenerated because of selfishness that he can only think of himself and his own and deny the fundamental needs of his neighbours and formulates self-centred principles of injustice in the name of Justice, started power blocks and divided mankind using colour, language, the so-called ethnic barriers of caste and broken the family of God, denying the basic Fatherhood of God and appropriated the right of selfish living as the right standard of justice. There is no religious standard approaching this except the dominating sin and self-centredness.

We are placed in a majority religion in India that had developed through the ages the religious sanctions by Varna-ashrama Dharma (Caste) and Karma the cycle of birth and death, absolving the economic and social condition of the neighbour. The good Samaritan story becomes the real illustration as to how the sufferer is not thought to be considered by the man of religion (the priest) he did not think of the man-in-need as the subject of his consideration but he thought of his position and status as the basic subject for the decision he had to make. But the Samaritan was moved to think of the deprived, robbed, wounded man as the primary cause for his decision and he did what the thieves and priests in general failed to do.

Our country is poor amidst being rich. Our ideology of concern is to set our minds on the poverty. 80% of our population are the suffering people with diseases and the misery of the people who after all, are the crea-

tion in the image of God. The true good News has been put forward by the Lord, to such people.

‘ The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath annointed to preach the Gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering the sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.’ Luke 4 : 18-19

The Lord Jesus Christ followed this rule of his ministry and trained the called disciples to carry on this ministry by empowering them with His Spirit, showing His wounds, blowing on them the Holy Spirit and giving them the Commandment.

‘ Peace be unto you, as my father hath sent me, even so send I you ’ St. John 20 : 21.

‘ Our Mission of Witness and service should be coupled with our readiness to suffer in an all-out fight against evil, oppression, corruption, exploitation, injustice, casteism, sexism etc., wherever they are found. Should we not believe that all are created in the same image of God and that all class distinctions are due to the Fall and that the Gospel of redemption should restore man to a classless society, sharing justly the spiritual material and sacramental resources of the Heavenly Father ? ’—Our common witness—Combat, Witness and Diakonia Biblical understanding by Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Osthathios.

This is the Apostles, the Disciples, the Called people, the Ekklesia—sent out. The early Church, had this vision and mission fully put into practice this commandment of its fullness. The lame man from the mothers womb, lying at the gate daily at the gate of the temple asked for alms—this was his day to day life of begging and living the life of a down-trodden man. Do we not see this in our daily life. The lame man was expecting something from them. But Peter said,—‘ Silver and Gold have I none, but such as I have, give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk ’—Acts 3 : 6. The proclamation of the Good News, became real, powerful and acceptable unto the people.

‘ Then Peter filled with the Holy Spirit said unto them, ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed to the impotent man by what means he is made whole ; ‘ be it known unto you all, unto the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God had, raised from the dead even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.’ Acts 4 : 9-10 ; 4 : 31. The great change of heart as they praised God, they were of one mind and of one heart. This is the historical reality of conversion. Vs. 34, 35 narrates how the Kingdom of God was initiated by the power of the Holy Spirit. The

sold their possessions and shared with others, "distribution was made unto everyman according as he had need". Has Marxist ideology a different economic code, except that instead of love, there is force, power and fear rule the sharing.

There is an open challenge to the Mission of the Church in India, 'why social work, medical, educational and other developmental work, are not acceptable and rewarding'.

'The intention was good as much as the liberated were expected to work for the well-being of their own people. But this did not happen! Through education, several people have been given opportunities for employment; fairly well-to-do Christian Congregations have been formed in the urban and industrial centres with no concern for the majority of their own people living in oppressive and exploitative socio-economic conditions. The foreign missionaries were on the whole concerned with organising mission institutions and structural patterns of the ministry with a view to strengthening the mission of the local churches but the mission thereby turned into a supervisory task over a large number of church workers—catechists, evangelists, teachers, and pastors. The commitment to proclaim the Good News to those who have not yet heard the Gospel was lost in the midst of administrative responsibilities and organisational concerns of the newly formed institutions of the Church. Rufus Anderson who was concerned about the pre-occupation of the mission in the institutional structures of the church demanded the closure of all institutions as they have become a hindrance to the mission of the Church.' Essays in Honour of Joshua Russell Chandran—A Vision for man, Edited by Samuel Amirtham—Christian Mission in the Face of poverty and injustice—Theological perspectives for Mission—Dr. Victor Premasagar.

The Gospel message, the Good News about the Kingdom of God, the power and authority of the function of the Holy Spirit in the daily life of the believer, is totally lost and distorted and the helpless, downtrodden man is lost and he is a member of the Kingdom of God lost in the perplexity of the Church which had lost its vision and purpose. The missionary Zeal is lost in the hierarchy of the church and church government. What little resources we have, financially, materially (property) and our talents are lost in verbal propoundity, ambiguous debates and discussion, and litigations. Is it not true that we have no money for drinking water wells, but 10 times the cost of well is spent on litigation. One Bishop of the CSI said we that are so full of court cases, injunctions and visiting lawyers that there is no time for the Kingdom of God. It is time for us to think of the vital mission by using the God-given talents. The paradox of the Gospel of Christ has to be practised in toto.

'And yet he cannot, or will not, save himself from the hostile powers that close in upon him as his ministry proceeds. The net that his enemies contrived is steadily tightening around him. Finally, he is bound, nailed helpless to a cross and left to die. The Saviour cannot save himself.

The same paradox is present in the words with which Jesus (according to the synoptic Gospels) sent out his disciples on their mission. They are given authority over the powers of evil to

release men and women from all that holds them in bondage; but they themselves are promised bondage, imprisonment, rejection and death. The saving power of God is to be carried and communicated by those who have no power to save themselves.' Essays in honour of Joshua Russell Chandran—The Right to Fullness of life—J. E. Lesslie Newbigin.

The power and authority has to be discharged in fear and trembling.

'And I was with you in weakness in fear, and in much trembling' I Corinthians 2:3.

The Lord's model of ministry of the mission of the Kingdom is totally distorted in our church life. The total commission of the Ekklesia. The mind of Christ is the core of the mission of the Church (I would like to use the Greek word—Ekklesia as this represents the local church and pervades the universal Church).

'If any man desires to be first, the same shall be last of all and servant of all' Mark 9:35.

'It is the servant (the diakonia) of the people that is emphasised. The servant king is the model.'

'Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the gentiles exercise lordship over them and their great ones exercise authority upon them.' Mark 10:42.

'And whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister (diakonia)' Mark 10:43.

(Diakonas) Servant—It is no good making a distinction as who is the minister and servant. Every person who is called to 'take up the cross and follow Him'. The diakonia we make in the status of the Church is false and uncalled for. The Bishop, the Presbyter, Deacon and the laity all are called—all are ministers, servants. In the kingdom of Jesus there has to be love, justice and service. Greatness consists not in reducing other men to ones services but in reducing oneself to their service. The test was what service I can extract, but service can I give. This should be basic concept of every Christian who wants to follow Jesus, the servant Lord. Gandhiji said:

'If every Christian in India lived and served as Jesus, there will be only Christians in India.'

We must know where exactly is the defect of the mission of the kingdom of God. The proof of the Gospel is in the 'ACTS'—our fruits. If the Father has to be glorified, it is through our fruits.

I want you to think of our administrative set up in the Church and the total concept of ministry.

The Diakonia—The instrument of Christ's Redeeming love:

The heart of *diakonia* lies in the redeeming love of Christ, because He first came to serve (diakonia) to give his life as ransom for the many. Matthew 20:28. Can his followers trace his footsteps in serving God's creatures. The Church is a dying community to present the living Jesus to the world. So the Diakonia is the concept of death to make others to live. II Corinthians 4:10-11

'At all times we carry in our mortal bodies the death of Jesus, so that his life also may be seen in our bodies. Throughout our lives we are always in danger of death for Jesus sake, in order that his life may be seen in this mortal body of ours. This means that death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.'

Therefore my concept is that the three-fold ministry is distorted in the course of history and we seem to have resorted to the most easy forms so that we will be avoiding the basic ministry of death to give life to the rest. So let us examine the need of the servanthood of the Lord and the cross—and glorifying power of communicating the living Lord into the hearts of men. We are working under a shadow of Christian ministry not trying into the true light of the Gospel—as it demands death—we are not in it. The sixth chapter of acts—ACTS 6:3

'Look ye out among you seven men of honest respect, full of Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom you can appoint over this business.'

This form of ministry was well developed by the year 150 A.D. But lost in many churches, though mentioned here and there as the three-fold ministry. For convenience sake, we have altered it to two because in the history of the Church there were two problems:

1. The confusion between the Bishop and the Presbyter as overseers and elders.
2. The concept of priesthood of believers.

As a solution to the problem—the Deacons had to suffer and as a big boost it was given as a big concession. Deacon was made to accept the ministry as a stepping stone to be a Presbyter. Today in the Church and churches, the ministry of Diaconate is lost as though it is an inferior form of ministry. The concept of diaconate in the CSI is wanting to grow for the 30 years. The Theological Commission, worked hard and presented the matter to the Synod finally after a Consultation on Patterns of Ministry and presented to the Synod in 1978. The life without Christ had not given us the format for action. Let us give it to the Diocese for study, action and report. What report and actions had taken place. Now there is more damage done to this great cause and ministry. Please do not ask me to explain. The Synod has now called for this consultation, but where we will move, I do not know. We will go to slumber for a few more years and call for another consultation. To make us feel that we are keeping the subject on our files—not on our hearts for action.

The need of the Diaconate is absolutely required, and demanding our action. There is hunger, poverty, disease and injustice, indebtedness, deprivation, untouchability. Do you need an elaborate statement of these matters? If you do not know the details let me say that 40 million people in India go to bed every night without food. The poverty line is going down everyday—there are more poor people in the land and the poor are becoming poorer. There is only one doctor for 59,000 people in India. Our education is the poorest and there are illiterates in our country, the literates are 30% and there are more women illiterates. Some of the Christians in the village are 13% literates. We can boast of so many educational institutions and colleges. But a layman, a keen observer of our Diakonia told me recently that

Christian Colleges care for merit of the students in admission. I did not dare to ask him what was the merit that was expected—the ability to make the college and the administrators rich. If this is the Diakonia of the church—let us give our colleges and let us train and get dedicated men and women to take up the cross and follow the Master. 'The oppressor has come to oppress' is the cry of the day. Let us not fool ourselves by degrading our service and concern for the setting up of the Diaconate as the form of ministry. The CSI must in each local congregation form the Diaconate and train the people, men and women for the glorious task of serving the people in need. We need not duplicate. There is an organisation which the Churches, the major churches of India set for the promotion of social action, let us use it for training, but as the interested in social action, nurture the leaders and give to CASA for training. There are 11 social development acts passed by the government, but no one knows anything about it. Let me list some of the ACTS.

1. The Minimum Wages Act—1948.
2. The Debt Relief Act—1977.
3. Civil Rights Protection Act—1955.
4. The Dowry Prohibition Act—1961.
5. Trade Union Act—1926.
6. Child Labour Act.

This is called—Parliament to People Programme. If you need more details, I can give you. We need not accept the methods of the communists to agitate and use violence. Our method is like the light, the salt and the leaven in the dough. Silent form of education and bring about justice.

(Debt Relief)

The concept of Marxism as developed by some theologians of the West followed by a few Indians as Liberation Theology is futile because it leads to situations of Godlessness and revolution and not reformation. The liberation demands inward transformation of the New Life—for Kingdom of God. There are Western Theologians who claim that the Gospel had failed and only Marxism will come to our rescue. This concept is developed in the Roman Catholic Church of Latin America and Africa. This is a total denial of the Kingdom of God. Let us not forget the historic data that when Lenin and his followers were working out the Revolution in Russia, the same night the church leaders were discussing the Vestments and different colours that they should use in the worship or Liturgy of the Church, the most insignificant things and missed the total reality of the Kingdom. Where is our obedience to the call and commitment?

It is hoped that this consultation will lead us into the seriousness of our socio-economic situation of our people in the Church and outside and be ready to be the servant Lord's servants. Let that mind of 'Jesus be in us to be able to build the Kingdom where the New Heaven and New Earth will take the place of injustice, poverty, disease and degradation, illiteracy, exploitation. Let us form the powerful Diakonia of the Church and be the stewards of justice, peace and love.

If the Church takes note of her function to fulfil the people for the mission of the Church. Eph, 4: 11-12.

'And he gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers. For the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ.'

It is our prayer, 'Thy Kingdom Come'. It is the Kingdom where God's will dominates. The Kingdom be far the poor. 'I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God shall come' Jesus did not speak of the kingdom of this world. Not a temporal kingdom supported by military power and Nuclear Bombs. The special kingdom needs special means.

Prayer—Jesus prayed before healing, feeding and proclamation. When a person's heart is renewed and yielded to God and fully obedient to God, God dwells in man's heart in faith and reigns by love, the Kingdom of God has come. Let this be the 'cry of the hour'. Let the Church be the people who have this renewed life in them and the Diakonia will be in us operating for the New heaven and earth. We lack this New life and the Church as I see it, is holding on to a thing which is not the primary cause of our faith. The visible Kingdom is the resulting of a repenting heart, believing in the Gospel, accepting the Master as the Saviour. The prayer ought to be for grace and obedience. Ask

Mother Teresa how she has fulfilled the ministry of a Deacon or Deaconess.

'The office of the deacon has to be revived in the Church as it has lost its central position. We do not have any evidence in the scriptures to think that the seven deacons were priested later and that deaconship is only a temporary step towards priesthood as it is practised now in many churches. Every parish must have permanent deacons to manage the diakonia of that Parish. The qualities that a deacon must have are enumerated in Acts, I Tim. 3: 8 etc. 'Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for gain; they must hold the mystery of faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons'. Again 'those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.' Our Common Witness—Combat, witness and Diakonia Biblical understanding by Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Osthathios.

The peace, hope, love and justice has to come to the world, all nations with this service of Diakonia. This is the problem we need to face. May the Lord help us.

Diaconal Ministry—Its Formation...—(Contd. from p. 9)

engaged in administration, evolving more useful methods of management of material and human resources.

Diaconal formation has to be seen in these diverse forms, working for renewal within oneself and within the community. Recently the Synod Council for Education has been exploring the possibility of introducing new and creative elements into the present school educational system with all its limitations and restrictions. Personal, diaconal and professional formation will be made through arranging special advanced training courses or seminars in terms of one's own profession from time to time. The Synod Councils for Education, Healing, Technical and Vocational Training and Child care could arrange courses and seminars for professional formation as per the regional needs.

As a recognition of this three fold diaconal formation

for effective institutional ministry of the Church, such people could be considered for deacon ordination as per the Synod and Diocesan procedures. This would envisage the implementation of an earlier decision of the Synod to institute a permanent diaconate.

The new diaconate will be an essential and permanent feature within the Ministry of the Church together with Episcopacy and presbyterate. The Ministry of the Church will include not merely the teaching, evangelistic, sacramental and pastoral dimensions but also developmental, educational, healing and other concerns of the community. This provides for a wholistic understanding of the ministry and a comprehensive approach to the contemporary issues in the community. The Diaconate will continue to have its place in the Liturgy of the Church, bringing these concerns into the worship experience and commitment of the Church.

Towards Community Building...—(Contd. from p. 19)

re-examine its structure to seek and eliminate inherent weaknesses which contribute to such phenomena.

As in the case of the outside society, I wish to point out to a specific programme which may be made an integral part of diaconal ministry to promote fellowship and community building within the Church, namely the concept of the house church, which has been experimented and practised in Indian Churches and elsewhere. Experience has shown that in a house church process persons can create and participate in a loving and caring community given the opportunity and leadership. Being small, face-to-face meetings they afford maximum opportunity for personal growth in the context of community building. The benefits accrued can also

have a cumulative effect on the whole church and greatly reduce conflicts. Over and above this, house church process can also provide training in responsible, open and loving leadership models which can benefit the whole Church.

In closing I may say that emphasis on community building puts diaconal ministry at a level which is more than just being a subsidiary of the other two forms of ministry. It opens up the possibility of giving diaconal ministry a leadership function which is fundamental in character. Exercised with imagination and spirit of innovation it can become the most exciting programme for revitalising the Church for the building up of God's people.

German Experience on Diaconal Ministry

DR. JORG SCHNELLBACH*



Left to Right :- 1. Dr. Jorg Schnellbach-General Secretary, EMS. 2. Miss Elizabeth Burgi. 3. Mrs. Burgi. 4. Rev. Robert Scheuermeier, India Secretary, EMS.

As I received the letter from the CSI inviting me to contribute experiences in Diaconal Ministry in Germany, I realised how little I really knew about their training. My experience was, however, that deacons worked in many different professions, mostly employed by the Church, but, also by other institutions. For some time a deacon was our colleague in the EMS Offices as Secretary for the Middle East, he had worked as Educator in an Orphanage in Lebanon before.

In order to tell you about perspective history and training of deacons in Germany, I translated passages from a leaflet written by a deacon's training institution near Stuttgart, published to invite young people to apply for such life vocation. The invitation goes to young men and women.

1. Perspective

'The one who becomes a deacon wants to do something—for and with people in the name of Jesus Christ.'

This sentence may sum up the motivation of many young people who are interested to train as deacons. The Tasks and areas of work of deacons are manifold. They cannot be pressed into the frame of a certain profession. One rather describes, what a deacon does, than to define what a deacon is.

A deacon works :

- in a congregation
- in youth work
- in institutions for handicapped people
- in caring for old people, in homes
- in caring for the sick
- in diaconal areal offices
- in schools teaching Christian religion.

Deacons may have different qualifications as social workers, tutors in homes, nurses, drug addict therapists, nurses for old people, catechists, healing therapists.

The Ministry of deacon may fulfil the special task of actively loving one's neighbour in forms relevant to social services of today—alongside the ministry of the pastor. The New Testament makes it clear that the commission to proclaim the Gospel and to care pastorally for people and to manifest faith by deeds of love, belong together yet they may not be fulfilled by one and the same person. In the first congregations, therefore you had the ministries of pastor and deacon.

Today, congregational, youth, and social work of the Church with so many different tasks, requires men and women who are able to meet their challenges as qualified

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persons, experts. For this it is necessary to be rooted within the Christian congregation and to fulfil a vocation as congregational deacon, as social worker, as teacher in Christian religion on this basis.

As additional help deacons are gathered in a fellowship (brotherhood/sisterhood). This is not a professional organization but a fellowship for life and work together. The professional qualification and the common diaconal service are the foundation for a communion of spiritual and professional outlook (point).

In the Federal Republic of Germany there are 15 Diaconal institutions where one may be trained and may enter the brotherhood (sisterhood).

2. The history of the profession of deacons

The 19th century was influenced by a diaconal oriented social work in Germany. A decisive contribution was made by Johann Hinrich Wichern at the 'Kirchentag' in Wittenberg in 1848. Changes in society resulted in social and human needs. Spontaneous actions of individuals developed into institutions like rescue-homes for people in need. The staff necessary were trained by the institution itself. According to the biblical examples they were called deacons. After the 'Raunes House' of Johann Hinrich Wichern many 'Brotherhouses' for deacons were established.

Already in those days the areas of work were manifold: in congregations, in rescue-houses, in homes for destitute people, in prisons.

In 1965 the many possible ministries of the deacon (more than 50) were still praised. He was an 'allround person' to be placed for everything and everywhere. Only a few years later the limitations of diaconal training were recognized as social work specialised. Personnel were required with qualifications in paedagogy, psychology and therapy. As deacons had no recognition of their training by the State in homes for disabled, as nurses, in hospitals or villages as social workers, they could not be employed in specific fields of work. A new orientation took place.

3. Training (Summary)

Two years (basic training: Theology and profession)

One year practical work.

Two years (main training with four possible professions: Congregation worker, social worker, youth worker, teacher of religious instruction).

First examination set by the Church.

Three years supervised service.

Second examination set by the Church.

Blessing (Commissioning)

The pastors are responsible for their work. I wonder whether you do not envisage a type of deacon somewhat, distinct, from the German example.

4. Observations and Questions

So deacons (male and female) are persons mostly with a non-Theological profession. Yet they are Theologically orientated to understand and to be able to explain why they as Christians engage in developmental, medical, educational and social work. They are professionally trained by secular or Church institutions, recognised by the state; they are also trained by the Church in short courses and guided by continued in-service-training.

They are and remain lay people, and I ask myself how the Church may safeguard that, they do not form a 'minor clergy'. They are to work as a team, the pastor being one member of that team contributing his theological training and insight.

I wonder whether deacons should be project leaders, or rather people who enable the community to organise itself to select their own leaders and to see to it, that they have and get the necessary training.

For this—I feel—the deacons need not be leaders of liturgical life of the congregations and to administer the sacraments.

They may contribute the issues for intercessory prayer, leading the congregations through their work and devotional life to a wider horizon to step beyond the limits of the existing congregation, and to help the congregation to its diaconate.

Do you intend to invite deacons to form a brotherhood—like the CSI sisterhood? It is important—to my understanding—not only to commission them (—I wonder whether the term ordination of deacons may not, be leading in to another direction—) but, to create a fellowship which spiritually helps and sustains them for their life-long vocation.

They may, however, not become an order totally exempt of the Diocesan structure of the Church. I understand that you envisage a regional structure to be the best.

The education for and invitation to a Christian Commitment in society may begin already in a Sunday school and in all educational institutions of the Church as well as in congregational life and youth work. So the Church may win the dedicated persons it needs for the diaconate.

'Diaconal Ministry—A Case And Some Models'

MR. JAMES BALARAJ* *Madras*

A Case :

My first memory is of a man who came to serve Met-tupatti village, in Trichy District as a DEACON. He not only assisted the local congregation in their 'spiritual needs' but all the more in the 'temporal ones'. I was then only 4 years old, but I distinctly remember his house flooded with people wanting cure for their simple physical ailments like headache, diarrhoea, cuts and wounds and more so for snake bites ! He served the whole community around.

My second impression of this man was when in Kumbakonam five years later he revived an elementary school and orphanage and made it a self-supporting middle school and hostel. It had the best of everything—education, vocational training, good nourishment, sports and games and scouts in the district. The whole unit was managed and run by him and his wife by donations collected from well-wishers from the local congregation and elsewhere. They used to take turns and visit towns like Tanjore, Trichy and Coimbatore for this purpose.

This school and orphanage were unique in several respects. First it was open only to the most needy—the outcastes and the orphans. Secondly, the staff were selected strictly on the basis of their competence and commitment, *regardless of castes and creed*. Thirdly, they had a *time-table and curricula to suit their needs*, the classes commencing at 7 a.m. The senior boys were sent in the afternoon to the Government Crafts Training Centre for a systematic training in various trades which were geared more towards self-employment. Those left behind were kept busy either in the rice field and in tending the trees and cattle, or in the kitchen garden or fishing pond, where new seedlings and fishlings were introduced for improving production and harvesting.

These seedlings and fishlings came from the Govt. Farm at Aduthurai and seeds and samplings for the garden from Bangalore. Apart from good vegetables, they had a very good Rose Garden too !

The school and orphanage were expanded and up-graded. It was recognised as the best school for sports and games and scout and cubbs. So much so, it won recognition even from the local Brahmin Community. The enlightened ones invited the man for dialogue in their College and Theosophical Society.

It was the time when the power of the dominant culture was so supreme that as a boy in the 1st form I had to sit in a separate desk away from others in the Town High School, as an outcaste. But it was a doctor from the same Brahmin Community who saved the Man's life and refused to accept any fees after attending on

him for weeks when he had Pneumonia. As a result of the man's standing in the community . . . (*)

As a result, the boys who were outcaste and orphan won access to the areas of the Caste Hindus where they were never allowed to enter before. In fact during the great Maha Maham festival 50 years ago, the scouts from this school saved five stranded children from stampede and restored them to their parents.

The man was also a good steward. He not only harnessed and developed all local resources but was also able to market what he produced in the campus. He constructed a small rural marketing centre. In the process the boys had the much needed additional training in simple skills and management technique in purchase, sales and marketing. They were involved in all these aspects, as part of the efforts to train them for gainful employment and also for making the School and Orphanage self-supporting. Well fed and nurtured in Christian values, and given the necessary training for life and leadership, the boys gained self-confidence and self-respect. When sent out into the world, they were able to face life with a keen sense of responsibility.

This is a typical case of Diaconia where an ordinary man with a Christian calling had involved himself totally in fulfilling as much the temporal needs of the least of our brethren as their spiritual needs. He struggled through his way to equip himself to the various tasks which he took upon himself in the course of his ministry.

Now the question is should we as a Church leave each one to learn by himself or herself for taking up the Diaconal Ministry, or should we have a definite plan for equipping those who have the will or whom we expect to take up such service ?

Some Models :

In the above case of Diaconal Ministry, different aspects like reviving the school and orphanage, making them self-sufficient through good stewardship, excelling in education, sports, games and scouts, initiating vocational training, offering simple sales and management techniques ; and especially enabling the 'untouchables' to break caste barriers and giving them self-dignity and confidence to face life by involving them in social action ; and finally entering into dialogue with the dominant community, stand out. Let us now see a few models of contemporary diaconal ministry in which one aspect alone is predominant.

1. *Model of the Missionaries of Charity :*

The best example of Christian compassion and charity is the remarkable service rendered to humanity

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by the Nobel Laurette Mother Teresa and her team of dedicated sisters. They pick up the unwanted, the uncared for and the most neglected who are left to die on the way-side, bring them to their homes, and care for them with all their love and affection.

This is something that is needed and to be appreciated. But the point is should we in our Diaconal ministry be confined to these acts of compassion? Or should we go further in making the unfortunate victims of our oppressive society to realise their situation and enable them to attain their self-respect through self-reliance by reflecting over their own predicament and trying to change their own destiny?

2. *Model of Institutionalised Economic Development :*

This is another approach in our Diaconal Ministry. We acquire vast areas of land. Establish a model farm. Appoint highly qualified people—preferably from abroad. Fly in pure breeds of cattle and chicks. Get the appreciation of the powers that be and perhaps bag a few trophies too, for a time.

Granting that some of them at least are still running well, has the effect of such efforts trickled down to the really needy in the community around, liberating them from their bondage?

3. *Model of Radical Reconstruction :*

Quite a few christians and non-christians with real concern for the poor sincerely believe that nothing short of a direct confrontation with the oppressive structures would lead to social reconstruction and any mission of mercy which is mostly relief or charity-oriented will only have a palliative effect and they perpetuate status quo.

Therefore their emphasis is almost wholly on sensitising and mobilising people to fight for their rights.

While one should really appreciate their zeal and commitment to the cause they believe in, can it be considered as part of the Diaconal ministry of the Church? On the other hand, can we not learn from some of their experiments and experiences?

In this connection a story is told about what happened in a village in Telengana during the days of famine in the early fifties.

There are of course many others which combine one or two aspects of these three models which are basically different. Within the given time, it is not possible to go into all these permutations and combinations. Nor is it necessary as most of you assembled here are already aware of the other models such as the Gandhian Model and that of the Contemporary Catholic Church.

Incidentally, there is another model—the model of the Naxalites who believe in Instant Response to Immediate Human Needs. In this connection a story is told that during the famine in Telengana in the early fifties . . .

Inference :

As a layman called to serve and already involved in the Church I feel that any ministry of the Church should be rooted in Christ and be patterned on His ministry to the world. It must be holistic as the 'Deeds' ministry (Koinonia) cannot altogether be divested from the 'Word' ministry (Diaconia). It should also demonstrate the character of the New Society.

In as much as the 'Good News' was proclaimed first to the humble and lowly shepherds there should be preferential option to the poor. Further, even the disciples and apostles were mostly shepherds, fishermen and artisans. So were many of the prophets.

Therefore it would be good to attract and invite men and women of character and courage of conviction from the ordinary walks of life—those engaged in making food, shelter and clothing, health and education etc. like the prophets, disciples, apostles and deacons. But they should come 'before winter' (retirement) and when there is light!—(The Burmese Exp.)

It is significant that the first words the Angel uttered even before proclaiming the Gospel to the poor were: 'Fear not'. So also the Diaconal ministry's first priority should be the removal of this fear from the poor and the powerless, the 'wretched of the Earth' from the Culture of Silence. The second priority would be to bring out their own potentials and enable them to liberate themselves from their bondage. These would lead to 'living dangerously for the Lord' by entering into people's struggle for social justice. If we are to partake in Christ's redemptive mission to the poor, we will have to be in solidarity with the people, for struggling with people is living in Christ, the Servant Lord.

This does not mean that there is no place for a mission of mercy, nor for any organised structure. Christian compassion certainly has a place especially for emergency/disaster relief; but not to create power structures of their own to maintain status quo.

It is Christian compassion that moved the man in our case study to revive the orphanage, but there was no attempt to make a big institution out of it. On the other hand his efforts helped, at least to an extent, to remove barriers of caste and promote self-help and self-respect, as early as 50 years ago.

He and his wife (as a team) were pioneers in a few other respects—e.g. the lady being amongst the first to start a vigilance Home for the fallen women under the Immoral Traffic Act of 1941. She was also an official Jail Visitor and an Hon. Bench Magistrate.

Equipping the 'Saints' :

It is said that the Church is people of God called to serve. If so unless the Diaconia is capable of penetrating into every parish and activate the congregation to be the 'salt' and 'leaven', God's 'chosen people' would become God's 'frozen people'. To illustrate, Gold is a precious and very useful metal. It can be 'bullioned' and kept in Fort Knox. Or it can be used in His Majesty's Service as Sovereign Currency. But before it is minted (or even made into an ornament like the wedding ring that binds or the Bishop's cross that adorns!) it has to be melted and beaten into shape. It has to be mined first from the bowels of the earth and separated from all impurities.

For such a Diaconal ministry the first requirement would be the filling of the Spirit—Christian concern and commitment. The second would be acquisition of skills required for the task. No doubt it is the Spirit that makes the mission possible. And those whom He calleth He also provideth. But let us also remember the 'wicked and slothful servant' who buried his talents without multiplying them; or for that matter 'the foolish maidens who waited for the Lord with no oil in their lamps'.

Diaconal Ministry - Towards Community Building

DR. R. JAYAKARAN ISAAC*, *Vellore*

It is increasingly recognised and accepted at all places and at different levels that what the World needs more today is community. At the same time it is also true that at no time in the history of the world that such pervasive and persistent threats are faced by different people which militate against the emergence of a new community. It is in this context of the tension between persistent demand for a new community and powerful deterrents against the emergence of such a community that I wish to look at the dimension of community building in Diaconal Ministry. One thing at any rate seems obvious, that the hope for the future of the society in which we live seems to be only in seeking a true community within the plurality which is inherited from the past; any religion, if it is to be accepted as a universal religion will have to accept the common humanity as its basis for its life and work. For the Christian Church this sociological insight has theological implications as well. The true community which the world seeks today, we believe, can only emerge as the result of the creative work of God, who says, 'Behold, I make all things new'. The Church is seen as the first fruit of this new community and as such it has the calling and the inescapable obligation not only to exhibit this true community in its own life and work but also to work in a larger context to bring this true community into being. The dimension of community building of the diaconal ministry of the Church should not be viewed in the narrow sense of building of the community within the Church but in the wider context of the world in which we live. At the same time it should be kept in mind that the Church cannot preach or advocate to the world outside what it does not possess within itself.

It would be natural in the light of what has been said so far, to take a critical and honest look at ourselves and ask what kind of self image we have of the Church and what others think of us and reflect whether there are elements which stand in the way of the Church working as a catalyst to bring about a new community.

One of the common images of the Church is of course the image of Christians as a community which is alienated from the cultural and national ethos of the country having dependence on Western culture. In spite of the best efforts of the leaders of the Church, people continue to talk about the need to bring the Christian community within the mainstream of national life. The second image of the Church is that of one which seeks to expand itself through questionable and objectionable means, seeking converts from weak and oppressed sections of the society. The Institutions of the Church seem to others as powerful instruments used for the expansionist policies of the Church. These two powerful images of the Church, namely, a somewhat exclusive

and alienated community and a community which attempts to expand at the cost of other sections of the larger community do prove to be stumbling blocks which we seek the role of builders of a true community.

Along with these external images, there are so many internal images of the Church that can be discerned among significantly large numbers of Christians who also have a bearing on these problems. One such is the tendency among many of us to completely identify the institutions and our Church structures with the Church, the body of Christ, and in extreme case, with the Kingdom of God. How many ordinary and common members of the Church are able to distinguish between the vision of the Church as a living expression of faith in Jesus Christ and our institutions and structures which are only the relatively impermanent and external manifestations of this vision? Even where such a distinction is made, are we not overfond of the image of the Church as a place where the word is preached, sacraments are administered and the faithful are nurtured? Though this image has its relevance, does it not lead, at the local congregational level at least, to the formation of an insular community? This has certain far reaching implications for the concept of ministry, a whole and diaconal ministry in particular. If we accept that the self-understanding of the Church has to be made more meaningful, then this re-interpretation has to be reflected in the role and function which we prescribe for our ministers including those involved in the diaconal ministry.

Another area of concern is the internal image of the Church as an authoritative and paternal structure which does not encourage openness and mutual trust. Most of us who are part of the administrative structure of the church would not entirely agree with this image but the fact remains that many people, particularly many young people do have this kind of image of the Church. Along with this image the church is often accused of having a structure which often denies justice to individuals, in the name of keeping the good of the whole church in mind. As I said before, we may not agree with this, but the image is there, and the accusations are there for us to take into consideration. True community cannot emerge in an authoritarian structure where paternalistic attitude or when individual dignity and importance are overlooked. Since the clergy are more likely to be identified with the structure of the Church, the diaconal ministry will have to share a large burden in eliminating this kind of image.

Another closely related image of the church is one of a politicised and polarised community and consequently conflict ridden. This polarisation is seen to take place either around personality cults or along lines

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casteism, which still seem to persist in our Churches today. It is obvious that a Church lacking in fellowship, a church where conflict is rampant can hardly be an instrument for building up of community elsewhere. Our understanding of the diaconal ministry, therefore, must include an understanding of the role which diaconal ministry has to play in promoting the inner fellowship of the Church. It is thus seen as a vital point of contact between the Koinonia and Diaconia of the Church.

To summarise that has been said so far, we may state that in order to inject the dimension of community building in our understanding and formation of a diaconal ministry of the Church, we have firstly to accept and affirm that the emergence of a true community in this world is not only a felt need of the society at large but also a theological imperative for the Christian Church; secondly the true community which is within the context of God's plan for the world is something not confined to the established Church circumscribed within its structure, but something which transcends the Church, of which it is the first fruit and foretaste; thirdly if the Church, through all its forms of ministry diaconal ministry in particular, has to rediscover its role as a catalyst which would enable different elements to combine, it has to consciously address itself to the problems of recasting the various internal and external images which relate both to the inner life of the Church and its manifestations outside the Church; and finally the enhancement of the content, quality and openness of the fellowship of the Church must be an important objective of diaconal ministry. In this sense, if we accept 'to prepare God's people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up' (Eph. 4: 12 NIV) as the mandate for diaconal ministry, this mandate has to be interpreted in a broad framework which includes all the above elements in order that the Church may truly be the instrument of God in ushering in a new humanity.

What practical guidelines may emerge from the above considerations? What are the practical ways by which those called for diaconal ministry be equipped to the task of community building? I can only suggest some possibilities for reflection and discussion.

To begin with I wish to suggest that those who are called by the Church for Diaconal Ministry should in no way be 'delinked' from the mass base of the society in general and the Church in particular. Sometimes the expressions 'called' 'set apart' 'commissioned' more so the term 'ordained' create psychological barriers between the person so denoted and the rest of the people. Non-Christians would consider them as part of the official church and other Christians would identify them with the structure of the Church about which they may have some reservations. The persons called should continue in their secular calling, be able to interact on an equal basis with others. They should be able to identify themselves with the people both within and outside the Church. I emphasise the point because only by maintaining the vital link with the people, those involved in diaconal ministry can develop and sustain an awareness and sensitiveness to the need of the people and work towards the building up of a new community. The increasing tendency to separate the Church from the World can be halted only if those involved in this ministry have the right mental make up and orientation. Simultaneously, the gap between the clergy and the laity can also be successfully bridged. In

terms of training this would also mean that apart from the theological orientation which may be needed to give the pastoral dimensions those involved should be encouraged in the study of socio-political issue of the society, drawing from the rich insights available from sociology and anthropology. If the diaconal ministry is to consist of people, who apart from the service they render to the community, are also entrusted with the role of 'image makers', they should have a broad based training in theology and sociology so that they can reinterpret the relationship between the Church and society in a new and dynamic way.

The second point to be considered is the structure of the diaconal ministry which needs to be flexible and free from authoritative patterns. The amount of rigidity which pervades the other forms of ministries, which may be inevitable as a historical inheritance for the sake of 'discipline', should as far as possible be reduced in diaconal ministry. Building up of a new community calls for innovation, ability to take risks and originality. A rigid structure would obviously be counter productive in this context. All that is expected of them should be a commitment and loyalty to the vision of the new community in Christ and the Church must support them in their effort without stifling them any way.

A specific strategy in terms of diaconal ministry for community building would be to utilise them to promote issues of common interest and concern for all people. This would not only counteract the image of the Christian Church as an alienated and exclusive community, but also will be in keeping with the theological and biblical image of the Church as a servant to the people. I have in mind issues of fight against poverty, casteism, dowry system, communal disharmony, corruption in public life, oppression of the weaker sections of the society and many others. Those chosen for diaconal ministry should be encouraged to take leadership in these areas of vital interest to society so that they can bring their Christian perspective into play and contribute to the building up of a just society. An added benefit would be in that they would be able to draw into this movement those young people who are committed to a radical social transformation, who at times become disenchanted with the Church and drift into politically based secular movements.

Coming to the role of the diaconal ministry in building up the community within the Church I would only touch upon two areas.

One great role that those involved in diaconal ministry can play is dealing with conflicts within the Church, in the personal and institutional level. There is a great need for people who can bring peace and reconciliation and healing in situations of brokenness. Therefore skills in listening, responding and counselling, group dynamics and human relations should become an essential equipment for those in diaconal ministry. A basic reason for most of the conflicts within the Church is the inability and refusal of the people to listen to each other, understand each other's position and come to an acceptable compromise regarding issues, maintaining the dignity of the persons involved. Building up of the community within the Church, therefore, would be possible only if there are people who can facilitate the process of openness and mutual trust. It must be recognised however, not all conflicts are due to interpersonal conflicts and the Church must seriously

(Contd. on p. 13)

NEWS from the DIOCESES

COIMBATORE DIOCESE

A GLIMPSE OF CHURCHES IN EAST ASIA

RT. REVD. J. THANGAMUTHU, *Coimbatore*

At the invitation of the Presbyterian Church in Korea, I attended its Centennial celebrations as a representative from Church of South India. The celebration was held from 14th to 23rd September 1984 in Seoul, Korea. Taking advantage of this opportunity, I visited Japan, Hong Kong, Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, on my return journey. The Christian Conference of Asia was kind enough to arrange my visits to those countries except Korea, by meeting my internal expenses in those countries.

The meetings of the Centennial Celebrations of the Presbyterian Church in Korea were mainly held in Yongnak Church in Seoul. In this Church five Worship Services are held on Sundays with three thousand people attending each Service. In connection with the Centennial Celebrations one big rally was arranged in an indoor auditorium in Seoul when 25 to 30 thousand people attended the rally. On behalf of the Moderator of Church of South India and on my own behalf, I conveyed warm greetings and good wishes to the Presbyterian Church in Korea at their Church assembly.

In other countries, I had opportunities to meet the Church leaders and learnt from them about the life and work of their Churches. I took the opportunity to share with the Church leaders the life and witness of Church of South India. I visited four Theological Seminaries and preached in three Sunday Worship Services, in Korea, Singapore and Malaysia. I had the privilege of visiting Asian Rural Institute in Japan. In Tokyo I visited the Memorial of Dr. Kagawa.

The Word 'Allah' (Urdu word for God used by Muslim) is also used for God by the Christians in Indonesia and in their Bible. In Thailand and Malaysia, the Christians have their marriages registered first before the Government Marriage Registrar and then arrange the marriage religious ceremonies in the Church, which is quite contrary to the practice in Indian Christian Churches. Churches are full of life and most of the Churches are self-supporting. Weaker Churches are adopted by big town Churches. In Malaysia the Anglican Church is running Kindergarten Schools for small children between the age group of 3-6 in the Rubber estates. These schools are run as Church Project.

In Thailand, I had an opportunity to visit 'The Lamp of Thailand' (Bible Correspondence Course headquarters) in Chiang Mai. The CSI is much proud of this Ministry, which was started by Rev. Paul Manickam who served there as CSI Missionary. After his death, his wife Mrs. Mono Manickam, CSI Missionary is helping in the headquarters. The Church of Christ in Thailand is now carrying on this work very efficiently with a department under a Director.

Different denominational Churches have become members on the respective National Council of Churches which enables them to provide a forum to consider the possibility of coming closer together as one Church.

National Council of Churches is playing an important role in this direction.

Bread for the World, a Donor Agency in West Germany gave me a travel bursary for my overseas visits. I received financial help from CSI Synod CTVT, my own Diocese and Christian Conference of Asia. I am thankful to all of them. In different countries the respective National Council of Churches arranged my programme of work and took care of me very well. My thanks are due to them. I am specially indebted to Mr. James E. Balraj, Executive Director of CTVT and Mr. G. R. Karat, Communications Secretary C.C.A., Singapore, who were mainly responsible for arranging for my tour to East Asian Countries.

KARNATAKA NORTHERN DIOCESE

Retreat for College Students

A retreat for Higher Education Scholarship students was held from 12th-15th Nov. 1984 at the Retreat cum Lay Training Centre, Dharwad. The Rt. Rev. Vasanth P. Dandin, Bishop of the diocese conducted the Inaugural Service. The Theme of the retreat was 'THE MISSION OF THE CHRISTIAN YOUTH IN INDIA'. The Rev. S. D. Azaraiah was the main speaker. Revds. Paul J. Kattebennur, E. A. Endigeri, P. C. Tatpati and Mr. Harris J. Narayan Rao were also other speakers who spoke on the theme. The retreat was organised by Mr. N. C. Barnabas, Convener, Higher Education Scholarship Committee of the diocese. 75 participants from all over the diocese participated and richly benefited. The Retreat proved very edifying. The valedictory service was conducted on the last day of the retreat. Mr. Bhavani, Registrar and Controller of Exams., Karnataka University was the Chief Guest. The group discussions, singing devotional songs and entertainment programmes were the special features of the retreat.

A Service of Remembrance

A service of remembrance and thanksgiving in loving memory of Smt. Indira Gandhi (our late Prime Minister of India) were conducted in many churches in the diocese. The Karnataka Northern Diocese mourns the tragic demise of our Prime Minister.

Our Good wishes and sincere prayers to the New Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi.

REV. PAUL J. KATTEBENNUR
Director—RLTC.

MEDAK DIOCESE

It is with sadness, we inform the demise of Rev. P.Y. Luke, B.D., on 5th November, 1984 after a brief illness. Rev. Luke was a towering personality. He was a minister for over 40 years. He held the offices of Vice-Chairman, Ministerial Secretary, DCC Chairman, Director for Voluntary Church Workers with distinction. He had also served as Bishop's Commissary for a short period. His major contribution was in training of hundreds of Voluntary Church Workers especially in the rural congregations. Mr. Luke was a prolific writer. He had the unique privilege of doing research work for WCC in Wadiaram in collaboration with Dr. John B. Carman and produced a voluminous book

titled 'Village Christians and Hindu Culture'. His love for Voluntary Church Workers reflected in an 'Handbook For Voluntary Church Workers'. He was in the process of writing the Diocesan Centenary History Book. But this remains incomplete.

The Diocese lost an eminent minister.

REV. B. PRABHAKER RAO,
Correspondent.

KARIMNAGAR DIOCESE

Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of the Parkal Mission

Sunday, 2nd December 1984 is to be recorded in golden letters in the history of Parkal Mission, a Missionary enterprise of Madhya Kerala Diocese in the jurisdiction of Karimnagar Diocese in Andhra Pradesh. On that day this Mission Field celebrated its Diamond Jubilee (60th Anniversary) in a befitting manner. The celebrations commenced in an atmosphere of gratitude to God Almighty for the wonderful way He has been guiding this Missionary work for the extension of His Kingdom for the last sixty years, despite many a troubles and difficulties. These celebrations took place in the large premises of CSI Mission High School Parkal which was aptly named as Eapen Nagar remembering the pioneer Missionary late Rev. K. E. Eapen.

The thanksgiving service started at 9.30 a.m. on that day was very significant. The procession, started from the church, with choir, clergy and Bishops slowly moved to the worshiping place and all people gathered there sang hymns of praise. This was followed by the rest of the Thanksgiving service including Holy Communion. The Rt. Rev. P. Solomon, Rt. Rev. B. Prabhudas, Rt. Rev. P. Victor Premasagar, Rt. Rev. M. C. Mani and the Rt. Rev. G. B. Devasahayam took part in the service, assisted by Revds. M. S. Christudas, B. Joseph, T.V. Kuruvilla, M. T. Tharian, I. C. Kurian, E. John Victor, Thomas K. Oommen, Shajan Idiculla, S. J. Theodore, J. Samuel, G. Nathaniel and Rev. R. Premanandam. Hundreds of people came from as many as 30 villages of Parkal Mission and other Pastorates took part in the Holy communion. The Rev. Dr. A. B. Masilamani shared the word of God.

Soon after the service a grand rally was organised and it was highly impressive and encouraging. It proved the strength and courage of Parkal Christians. All the Missionaries were in the fore front of the rally leading it through the main streets of Parkal town. All the Bishops and other clergy travelled in a decorated van during the procession. The procession was really a Christian witness during this Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

The public meeting was held at 4-30 p.m. and Sri. P.V. Narasimha Rao, Union Minister for Home Affairs was the chief guest. The Rev. M. Azariah, General Secretary, Church of South India delivered the inaugural address. In his address the chief guest Sri Narsimha Rao stated that Christianity is deep rooted in the Indian soil from 1st Century A.D. He also praised the service motives of the Missionaries and the national loyalty of Christians in India. He concluded his speech after paying tributes to all those who worked in this Mission Field and offering good wishes to the organisers of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Bishop P. Solomon, Bishop B. Prabhudas, Bishop M. C. Mani of Madhya Kerala Diocese, Sri. G. Anantha Rao, Diocesan Secretary, Karimnagar; Rev. I. C. Kurian, Mission Board Secretary Madhya Kerala; Sr. Rachalamma Chacko and Mr. B. Satyanandam conveyed greetings in the meeting. Bishop P. Victor Premasagar of Medak

Diocese delivered special message. Bishop G. B. Devasahayam of Karimnagar Diocese presided over the meeting. The Rev. P. O. Ninan, Field Secretary Parkal Mission welcomed the guests and other people and Rev. B. Joseph proposed vote of thanks. Sri. K. J. Thomas, Convener Diamond Jubilee celebrations, Presented report on the activities of Parkal Mission. Cultural programme and burrakadha were arranged in the evening.

Earlier, revival meetings were held from 29th November to 1st December in which Rev. Dr. A. B. Masilamani was the main speaker. This revival meetings and the other arranged in the month of February 84 paved the way for spiritual awakening in the Mission Field which was the main purpose of celebrating this Diamond Jubilee. Jubilee celebrations were held in about thirty Christian villages and the celebrations on 2nd December 84 were the culmination of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations which has surely a revitalising spiritual impact in the minds of the Christians and Christian leaders in and around Parkal Mission.

K. J. THOMAS, B.Sc., B.Ed.
C.S.I. High School, Parkal.

Notices

BISHOP COTTON BOYS' SCHOOL BANGALORE

Applications are invited for the post of Principal from those aged between 45 and 55 years, with a post-graduate degree preferably in science and with a Bachelor of Education or equivalent. They should have a minimum of 15 years teaching experience and belong to the Christian religion. Those with additional academic qualifications and administrative experience will be preferred. Those with postgraduate theological qualifications are eligible to apply. Salary scale offered is Rs. 1300-50-1700-75-2150-100-2750-125-3000 with partially furnished free quarters, car allowance and C. C. A. Last date for receiving applications is 15th of January, 1985.

For any further details and proforma application forms, please write to Chairman, Selection Committee P.O. Box 8423, St. Thomas Town, Bangalore-560 084, S. India.

CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA VICTORIA HOSPITAL DICHPALLI

NIZAMABAD DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH

The above named Leprosy Hospital urgently requires an experienced Leprologist for the post of Director. The candidate should be in the age group of over 40. Apart from its Leprosy Work the Institution also carries out Leprosy Research, Village Leprosy Control, Community Health and Development work and Rehabilitation. The Hospital caters for 300 in-patients.

This is a Senior post. Salary is negotiable.

Please apply giving full details of qualifications, experience and other relevant information to reach the undersigned by 10th January, 1985.

ADMINISTRATOR
VICTORIA HOSPITAL
DICHPALLI-503 175
NIZAMABAD DISTRICT
ANDHRA PRADESH.

CASA RELIEF FOR CYCLONE HIT IN A.P., AND T.N.

A severe cyclone ravaged coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu on November 12-13, 1984. The cyclone left a trail of death and destruction in its wake and on November 19, the death roll was put at 375 in Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu. Of these Nellore (A.P.) accounts for 304, Chittoor (A.P.) 17, Madras (T.N.) 17 and Chingleput (T.N.) 37. The worst affected areas were Nayudupet, Sulerpet and Vakadu taluks and Kota Samiti in Nellore district.

CASA'S RESPONSE

CASA responded to the emergency by providing 1,000 relief sets comprising of a saree, a dhothy, a blanket and a set of utensils in five centres in Madras. Another 1,000 sets have also been distributed in Nellore district in cooperation with General Secretary, Samavesam of Telugu Baptist Churches.

Cost of the programme is approximately Rs. 3 lakh.

MR. ISAAC P. MANN, P.R.O.

CHURCH AID FOR DELHI, JABALPUR RIOT HIT

Following the orgy of violence that rocked Delhi during the two days immediately after Mrs. Gandhi's assassination, CASA decided to take up a programme to provide relief to the community affected by the riots, under the chairmanship of Rt. Rev. Maqbul Caleb, Church of North India, heading a committee of Churches and Church institutions in Delhi.

Following discussions with Mr. M. K. Wali, Lt. Governor of Delhi and after intensive survey it was decided that CASA would provide 10,000 blankets to the people in the relief camps.

Accordingly CASA distributed blankets in eight of the camps. Volunteers from the Vyakti Vikas Karyakram of the Methodist Church in India, St. Stephen's College, Ingraham Institute, St. Thomas Girls Higher Secondary School, Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. assisted.

The St. Stephen's Hospital also provided CASA Medical Teams to go out into the camps to provide medicines for the sick. A mass inoculation programme was also undertaken for which 10,000 vials of TABC vaccine were airlifted.

CASA is also distributing 500 sets of relief material to the riot-hit in Jabalpur, the relief packets comprise of a saree, a dhothy, a blanket and a set of utensils.

C.S.I. WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The central committee met in Bangalore from 13th to 15th Oct. 84 and elected the following as officers for 1984-1986.

MRS. PRAKASH RAO — *President—Andhra,*

MRS. MOLLY ABRAHAM — *Vice President—Kerala.*

MRS. HILDA JOHN — *Tamil Nadu.*

Prayer Cell & Action Cell.

For the first time C.S.I.W.F. had thought of cells to involve themselves in issues both at state and national level.

One day was spent in group discussions on the theme, 'Co-workers in Action'. Suggestions given were thought out and resolutions were passed for implementation at Diocesan level.

SUGUNA DEVASUNDARAM

C.S.I.W.F.

General Secretary

DIOCESE OF CHOTANAGPUR (CNI)

Unity Sunday—1984

For the last five years the members of the CNI-CSI and MTC in Ranchi have come together for Worship and Fellowship on the second Sunday in November.

This time it was the turn of the CNI-CSI groups to go to the Mar Thoma Church in Dhurwa, which is in the location of the Heavy Engineering Corporation (H.E.C.) where a United Service was held at 9.30 a.m. on Sunday 11th November.

The Rev. K. M. Philip (CNI) was the Celebrant and the Rt. Rev. S. A. B. D. Hans pontificated. (The Diocesan Bishop The Rt. Rev. J. A. Gonsalves was out of Station). The vicar of the Mar Thoma Church assisted.

Copies of the Order of Worship, prepared by the Liturgical Commission of the CNI, in which we included the portion of Holy Communion, were provided for all and all took part.

Before the Service began two minutes silence was observed as a mark of respect to our late Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

The Service began with a bhajan. The Adoration was said by the three Churches separately. A multi-wicked lamp was used and three laymen—one from each Church—lit the lamp to symbolise the Unity between the three Churches.

Mrs. L. Gonsalves, member of the Joint Council of CNI-CSI & MTC was the preacher and she spoke on the theme 'Acknowledging the gifts of the Spirit'. In her introduction she drew our attention to the Constitution of the Joint Council, which recognises the three Churches as belonging to the One Church of Jesus Christ in India even while retaining autonomy, each having its own identity traditions and organisational structures. She said that this is the time for the three Churches to bring their special gifts to the Lord of the Church so that the fullness of the gifts of the Spirit is revealed through the life of the Church in India.

THE REV. K. M. PHILIP

St. Paul's Cathedral, Ranchi

JANUARY 1985

OUR RECENT PUBLICATIONS

CHOOSE LIFE! (The Nuclear Threat)

by Shanta Kingston

.. Rs. 6.50

This book on nuclear threat highlights the devastating effects of nuclear war, the preventive measures taken on the political, social and religious spheres with emphasis on Christian contribution and responsibilities towards establishing peace and justice in the world. The progress of nuclear energy in India and the impact of Indian Atomic Explosion in 1972 on other countries are also dealt with, in brief.

AINKURUNURU (The Short Five Hundred)

by Prof. P. Jotimuttu

PB Rs. 40.00

HB Rs. 45.00

Prof. P. Jotimuttu has attempted here an original translation in prose of the love poetry in the Tamil classic *Ainkurunuru*. He has provided an elaborate introduction; and the literal translation of each poem is followed by a detailed commentary. The book will be of great interest to scholars and those interested in the modes of poetry in the Tamil language.

RESOLVING CONFLICTS IN THE CHURCHES

by Raymond W. Beaver and Ronald S. Kraybill

.. Rs. 15.00

Conflicts in the Christian Churches; What are the causes? Divided into two parts, Part I reviews the causes through the study of the New Testament. These studies include a brief commentary and provides questions to ponder and discuss in group meetings. Part II provides some practical ways to help us look through the church and interpersonal conflicts using tried and tested methods of conflicts resolution. This is a handbook to bring healing to our broken and divided Christian communities and churches.

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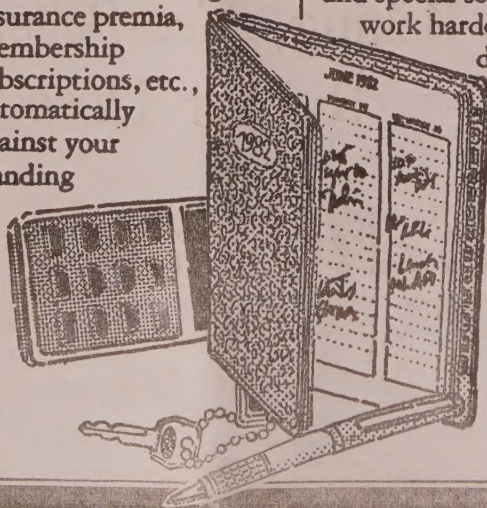
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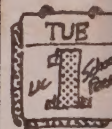
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